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Private First Class Ross A. McGinnis

Courage, sacrifice, and duty were more than mere words for Private First Class Ross A. McGinnis. He embodied those patriotic ideals. McGinnis valiantly went beyond the call of duty and sacrificed his life. He was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

On December 4, 2006, Private First Class Ross A. McGinnis from Knox, Pennsylvania was stationed at Adhamiyah, Iraq. While he and his platoon were leading combat control operations to reduce violence in the area, an insurgent threw a grenade into McGinnis's Humvee. Without a moment of hesitation, McGinnis valiantly leaped on top of the live grenade and absorbed its powerful and deafening explosion. McGinnis was killed instantly. This tremendous act of courage and bravery not only saved the lives of the four members of his platoon, but those of innocent bystanders. By any definition, this selfless soldier is a hero.

On June 2, 2008, the family of Ross A. McGinnis was presented the Congressional Medal of Honor by President George W. Bush on behalf of their son's gallant deed. The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration awarded by the United States government. It is bestowed upon a member of the United States armed forces who distinguishes himself or herself, "conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his (or her) life above and beyond the

call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States.” Without question, Soldier Ross McGinnis met the criteria.

McGinnis’s selfless act is difficult for many American civilians to comprehend. Why would someone lay down their life to save the lives of four other co-workers? The answer is simple. They are family. Soldiers have an incredibly powerful bond and sense of duty toward one another. During times of war, they not only rely upon each other for companionship, but also for survival. McGinnis willingly sacrificed his life to save the lives of his family, his fellow soldiers.

McGinnis’ selfless and heroic act should serve as a solemn reminder that our brave soldiers lay their lives on the line every single day. During that split second on December 4, 2006, McGinnis was not motivated by accolades or fanfare. His sole motivation was to save the lives of his fellow soldiers. By performing this heroic deed, McGinnis demonstrated courage, sacrifice, and duty. McGinnis was a true soldier.